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Bolsheviks Against Stalinism 1928-1933: Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition by Vadim Z. Rogovin

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The *World Socialist Web Site* and Mehring Books announce the publication of *Bolsheviks Against Stalinism 1928–1933: Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition* by Marxist sociologist and historian Vadim Z. Rogovin (1937-1998). The release of the English-language version of the second volume in Rogovin’s seven-volume series, *Was There an Alternative to Stalinism?*, is a major event in the fight against the falsification of Soviet history. It is part of the struggle to arm the international working class with the knowledge of its own revolutionary past, the necessary foundation for the building of a revolutionary future.

In this second volume, Rogovin focuses on five critical years spanning the late ’20s and early ’30s. Rogovin’s work demonstrates that there existed within the Soviet Union and internationally a powerful socialist opposition to Stalinism, led by Leon Trotsky.

The expulsion of Leon Trotsky from the Soviet Union in 1929 failed to silence the great revolutionary and his many followers in the USSR. Trotsky’s exposure of Stalin’s betrayals encouraged the emergence of a broad network of oppositional groups, which the regime met with intensifying political repression. Careening from one economic and political crisis to the next, the Stalin regime continually confronted resistance to its policies from within the party and the working class, to which it responded with savage reprisals.

Bolsheviks Against Stalinism begins with an introduction by the author that discusses the political significance of the book at the time it was first

published in 1993. Rogovin observes that the restoration of capitalism in the USSR rested on false myths about Soviet history and false promises for the future, all aimed at securing the interests of the privileged by defaming socialism with historical lies. The biggest of all these lies was that Stalinism equaled socialism.

To refute this, Rogovin poses, and his book answers, what he describes as “the most complex historical riddle of the twentieth century.” “Why, on the ground prepared by the October Revolution, did there appear a phenomenon such as Stalinism?”

Bolsheviks Against Stalinism is a masterful account of the economic crises seizing the Soviet Union during this period, the origins, programs, and positions of the left and right oppositions that emerged to the bureaucracy, the recklessness and brutalities of collectivization, the material privileges of the party-state elite, the ideological war waged by the Stalinists against Marxism, the coming to power of Hitler, and Trotsky’s relentless defense of revolutionary socialism.

The literary nuances of Rogovin’s evocative prose have been brilliantly rendered into English by the translator, Frederick S. Choate. The book is illustrated with scores of rare photographs. The 32-page “Selected Biographical Notes” gives brief descriptions of dozens of figures—most murdered by Stalin between 1934 and 1939—many of them little known in the English-speaking world.

Rogovin’s work, which draws on archival material, documents, memoirs, speeches, articles, and the underground *Bulletin of the Opposition*, was based on

decades of research. In 1992, after having made a clandestine study of Trotskyism for years, Rogovin met the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and finally found genuine political co-thinkers. He wrote *Bolsheviks Against Stalinism* and the remaining five volumes of his series in close collaboration with the ICFI.

Bolsheviks Against Stalinism is available from Mehring Books in two formats: Some illustrations in full color \$39.95; all illustrations in black-and-white \$29.95

Mehring Books also offers two other English language volumes in the series: *1937: Stalin's Year of Terror* and *Stalin's Terror of 1937–1938; Political Genocide in the USSR*

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